

Stream 3 Forest Landscape Restoration: Opportunities and Challenges in the Congo Basin (COMIFAC) countries – draft impulse paper

Focus on forest protection and sustainable management of forest in Congo Basin
To address development/socio-economic challenges as well as drivers of deforestation and increasing forest degradation, restoration can play an important role in the Congo Basin

The “fair deal” aims to contribute to the protection and sustainable use of forests in the Congo Basin by 1) improving access to financial resources for forests, 2) focusing on improving forest governance through ownership and participation, and 3) creating clear rules for deforestation-free supply chains. *Central African countries' commitments to landscape restoration have the potential to deliver about three times more the climate benefits of all GCF allocations to date... These Central African commitments represent 24% of global commitments and 28% of African countries' commitments under the Bonn challenges...*

Background and Context

In the last decade, Africa continued an upward trajectory of deforestation and degradation with a net annual forest loss of 3.94 million ha from 2010-2020 (FAO, 2021). As much as 65% of productive land in Africa is in different states of degradation. As a consequence desertification further increases and already affects 45% of Africa's entire land area. The annual global cost of land degradation as a result of land use/cover change (LUCC) and land degrading management practices on static crop and grazing land are estimated to range from 300 to 490 billion USD (Nkonya et al., 2016; UNCCD, 2013; Degroot et al., 2013). Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) accounts for the largest share or 22% of this. Estimates of the cost of taking action against land degradation suggest that on average, one US dollar investment into restoration of degraded land returns five US dollars (Nkonya et al., 2016).

From Dalimier et al. (2022) The area of evergreen and semi-deciduous forests in Central Africa was estimated at about 200 million ha in January 2020, of which 184.7 million ha without any visible signs of disturbance (Vancutsem et al. 2020). Overall, almost 9 per cent of the area of tropical rainforests in Central Africa has disappeared since 2000, i.e. 18 million ha.

Degraded forests in Central Africa represent about 7% of the remaining TMF area (up to 30% if we consider forests located on the edge of disturbed areas), and about 40% of all forest disturbances (deforestation, regeneration and degradation).

The analysis of the evolution shows a considerable increase in the annual rate of disturbance in the tropical rainforests of Central Africa over the last five years (2015-2020): it is indeed 1.79 million ha per year while it was only 1.36 million ha in the previous decade (2005-2015)

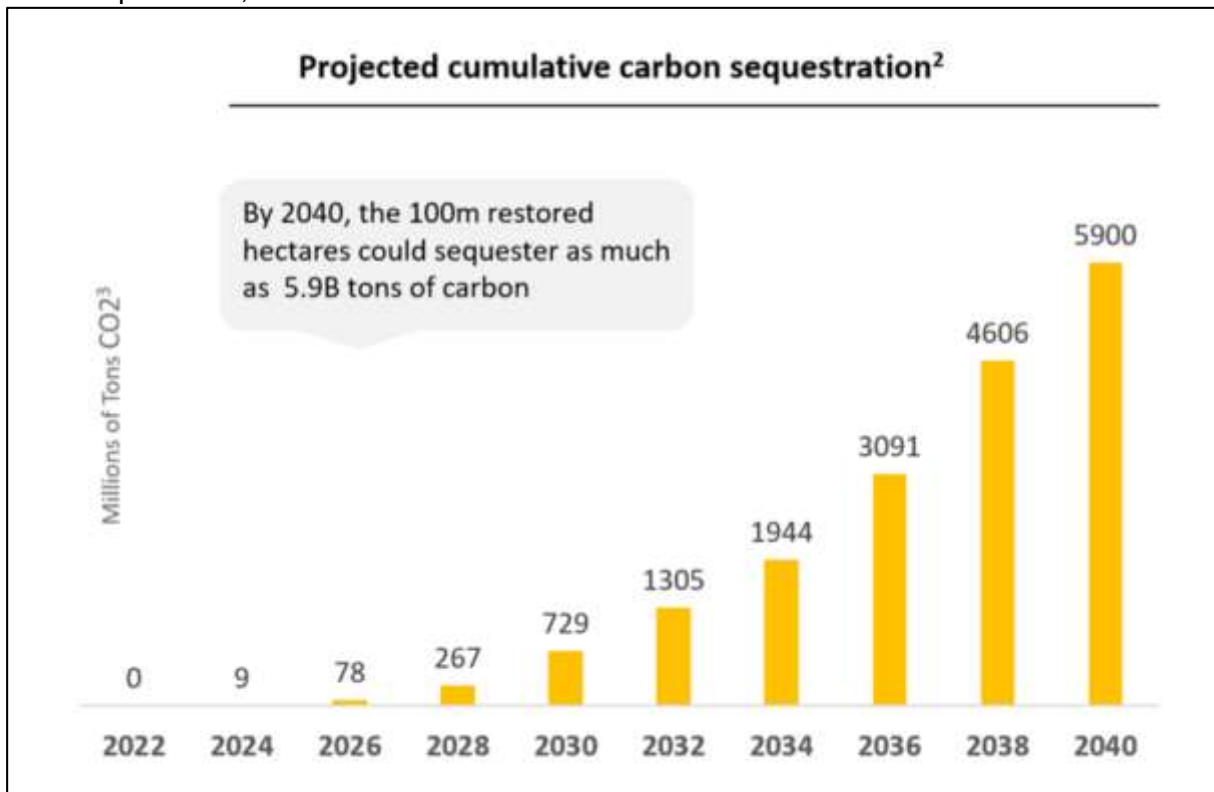
In recognition of the potential contributions of FLR at scale to the global environment and sustainable development goals governments across the globe established the Bonn challenge in 2011. Its global restoration target was reconfirmed and increased in the New York declaration on Forests (NYDF) to a global restoration target of 350 million ha by 2030 at the UN summit in 2014.

Against this background, African governments have made ambitious voluntary restoration commitments. In 2015, the regional African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) was launched to restore 100 million hectares (ha) of degraded forest and land by 2030. The first phase of AFR100 garnered pledges of almost 128 million hectares from 32 African countries: COMIFAC countries have pledged a total of 30.9 million hectares to the AFR100, which adds up to about a quarter of the current total pledge to AFR100.

Specifically on Central Africa Countries: Central African countries' commitments to landscape

restoration have the potential to deliver about three times more the climate benefits of all GCF allocations to date... These Central African commitments represent 24% of global commitments and 28% of African countries' commitments under the Bonn challenges... (see more: <https://pfbc-cbfp.org/news-partner/Africa-commits.html>)

Projected cumulative carbon sequestration potential for AFR100 is up to 5.9 billion tons of carbon up to 2040, see table below:



Challenges for implementation of forest landscape restoration in the Congo Basin -

Address drivers of forest and land degradation: energy demand (fuelwood), agriculture (subsistence, transhumance, plantations), resource extraction (incl. artisanal logging), population pressure

Land and Forest Governance: land tenure – who owns the land where restoration is done? Strengthen institutions (capacity development), focus on local implementing organizations and extension providers

Needs of growing (urban) population (energy and food)

Access to finance: Mobilizing different public and private finance for different for restoration costs

Monitoring restoration progress: existing monitoring frameworks and experiences

Opportunities for forest and landscape restoration in the Congo Basin/COMIFAC

1. **Leverage existing partnership such as CBFP and AFR100** to improve access to finance and implement progress in the context of forest and landscape restoration objectives.
2. **Harness restoration potential around protected areas** to reduce pressure on remaining high conservation value areas and tap into additional resources for carbon removals through forest landscape restoration in the Congo Basin countries
3. **Take a smart approach for land-use planning** with a focus on participatory, community-based and landscape approaches that will address land tenure and sustainable forest management
4. **Focus on increasing agricultural production on existing arable land** through the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices and agro-forestry
5. **Address energy demands** of a growing population through sustainable production of fuel wood, including small-scale, high turn-over plantations and agro-forestry
6. **Strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration** on national, regional and local level between forestry, water, agriculture, planning, etc.
7. **Mainstreaming Restoration in international Climate and biodiversity Budget as well as on Private sector investment in Central Africa.**

[Building on the Kigali Declaration \(2016\) and on the Main conclusions of the Extraordinary Council of COMIFAC Ministers of March 2018 on “Common Resource Mobilization Strategy for the implementation of countries' commitments to the Bonn Challenge”. Grand conclusions of the Extraordinary Council of COMIFAC Ministers of March 2018 on Common Resource Mobilisation Strategy for the implementation of countries' commitments to the Bonn Challenge. A major recommendation of the COMIFAC Council of Ministers was to propose an Investment Programme for Landscape Restoration in Central Africa as part of the Bonn Challenge. The commitment of countries to pool GEF and GCF funds and the Adaptation Fund. The Libreville Meeting of the Parties is an appropriate framework to continue the reflection and come up with a programmatic proposal that would allow for the absorption of the resources envisaged to be mobilised under the Fair Deal. The technical partners of the Landscape Restoration will be called upon to create a concerted programme framework for this purpose. In addition, the recommendations of the Extraordinary Council of Ministers of COMIFAC remain relevant to the Stream](#)

Additional information:

- Case Study from Rwanda

[A Thousand Hills Turn Green: How Rwanda became a leader in forest landscape restoration \(arcgis.com\)](#)

[Launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration: Central Africa commits to the restoration of...: <https://pfbc-cbfp.org/news-partner/Africa-commits.html>](#)

Read also: Le défi de Bonn : Les pays d’Afrique centrale restaurent 34,56 millions d’hectares de forêt dans le Bassin du Congo, riche en espèces : <https://archive.pfbc-cbfp.org/actualites/items/riche-esp%C3%A8ces.html>

[COMIFAC Ministerial Council March 2018: Common Resource Mobilization Strategy for the implementation of countries' commitments to the Bonn Challenge”:](#) <https://archive.pfbc-cbfp.org/actualites/items/ConseilMinistres->

2018.html?file=docs/news/Mars%202018/Strat%C3%A9gie%20Commune%20de%20mobilisation%20des%20Ressources%20pour%20la%20mise%20en%20oeuvre%20des%20engagements%20des%20pays%5B1%5D.pdf

AFR100 pledges of COMIFAC countries

	Country	AFR100 Pledge (mio ha)	Year	Bonn Challenge pledge
1.	Angola	-	-	
2.	Burundi	2 mio ha	2015	2 mio ha
3.	Cameroon	12 mio ha	2017	12 mio ha
4.	RCA (Central African Republic)	3.5 mio ha	2016	3,5 mio ha
5.	Tchad	1.4 mio ha	2017	5 mio ha (2017)
6.	Congo Brazzaville	2 mio ha	2016	2 mio ha
7.	RCD (Democratic Republic of Congo)	8 mio ha	2016	8 mio ha
8.	Gabun	-	-	-
9.	Equatorial Guinea			-
10.	Rwanda	2 mio ha	2011	2 mio ha
11.	Sao Tomé et Príncipe			-
	Total pledges of COMIFAC countries	30.9 mio ha		34,5 mio ha

See: [AFR100](#) | and [Current pledges | Bonchallenge \(bonchallenge.org\)](#)